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J. Richard Greenwell

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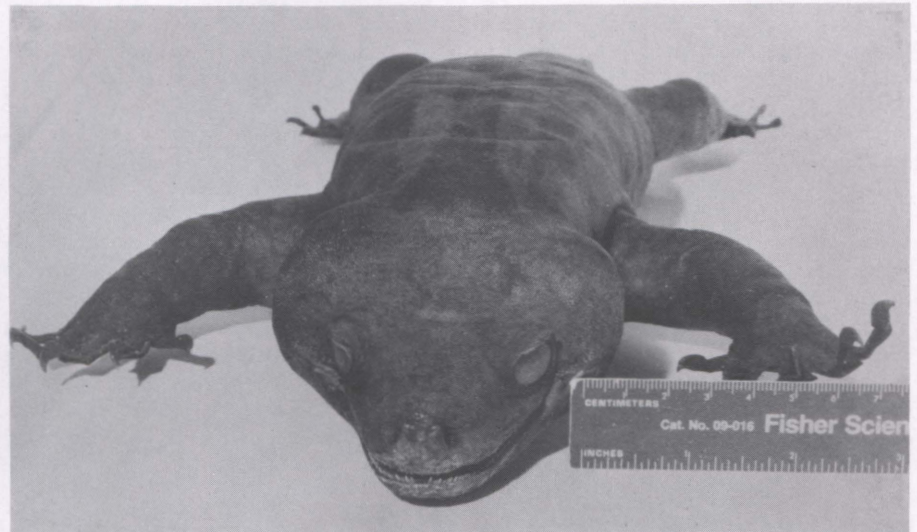
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WORLD'S LARGEST GECKO DISCOVERED



The giant gecko "discovered" in a French museum, the only known specimen in the world. It is believed to have been collected in New Zealand in the 19th century. This new species has been scientifically described and named, and has been linked to the kawekawau, a reptile of Maori folklore. (M. Papazian, Marseille Natural History Museum.)

While most people think of cryptozoology as dealing with unknown animals in their forest, swamp, mountain, or aquatic habitats, another component which has received little attention is the search for--and discovery of--such unknown species in the collections of natural history museums.

Sometimes, probably more often than is realized, unknown species may be "hidden," not only in their natural habitats, but also in such museum collections. In some cases, a specimen (sometimes only part of an animal, such as a skull or a feather) of a scientifically unknown species may be mistakenly catalogued as belonging to a known species because the collector and/or the museum curator did not recognize it for what it really was.

In other cases, particularly with collections dating back to the 19th century which have received little recent atten-

tion, a specimen may simply be catalogued as "unknown," and then forgotten about--until perhaps a curious contemporary naturalist stumbles across it and attempts an identification.

This is precisely what has happened with the recent discovery of the largest gecko in the world, which measures 370 mm (14.5 in) in snout-vent length (SVL), and has a total length of 622 mm, or just over 2 feet.

This SVL represents a remarkable 54 percent increase in the known size of members of the family Gekkonidae, the largest previously known specimen having a SVL of 240 mm (9.5 in).

This was for a West German museum specimen of the species *Rhacodactylus leachianus* from New Caledonia, a South Pacific island. This specimen was also considered a giant because, of the 800+ species scientifically described from around the world, only 3 percent have a maximum

SVL length of over 130 mm (5.1 in).

Despite its scientific recognition, the new gecko remains almost as much a cryptozoological mystery as before, as the location of its natural habitat is uncertain. The zoologists who have formally described it, however, link it to a supposed New Zealand reptile of Maori folklore.

The story began to unfold at France's Marseilles Natural History Museum when Alain Delcourt, a curator, became curious about a very large but unidentified mounted lizard which had been in the museum's collection for probably at least a century.

He sent photos of the specimen to George Zug, chief curator of herpetology at the U.S. National Museum (and a founding ISC Board member), and to Garth Underwood, at the City of London Polytechnic. The photos found their way to gecko experts Aaron M. Bauer, then at the University of California at Berkeley (and soon to join the biology faculty at Villanova University, in Pennsylvania), and Anthony P. Russell, at the University of Calgary.

Bauer and Russell were stunned by the sudden appearance of this giant new form, particularly in view of the fact that the specimen had been on full public display in Marseilles for many years, and had been seen by many thousands--if not hundreds of thousands--of visitors, presumably with nobody realizing its significance.

Following Bauer's personal examination of the specimen in Marseilles--it is incomplete, containing only the skull and limb bones--he and Russell published a formal description of it as a new species in the genus Hoplodactylus. They named it H. delcourti, in honor of the French curator ("Hoplodactylus

delcourti n. sp. [Reptilia: Gekkonidae], the Largest Known Gecko," New Zealand Journal of Zoology, Vol. 13:141-48, 1986).

There is a presumption that this giant gecko is now extinct, as no other specimen is known to exist anywhere. Bauer and Russell also believe that the specimen came from New Zealand, as the genus Hoplodactylus, up to now represented by eight species, is strictly from those South Pacific islands. (Unfortunately, there are no collection or location records on the specimen, as the Marseilles Museum archives from the mid-19th century are now lost.) The other factor that links it to New Zealand is the mythical Maori reptile, of which more below.

While Bauer and Russell admitted in their article that "it would normally be preferable to delay description until additional material and/or documentation became available," they also felt that, "as this species is likely extinct, the greatest hope for obtaining additional information lies in creating an awareness of the existence and significance of this unique specimen. For this reason publication is now appropriate."

They also pointed out, correctly, that such a description, based on one incomplete specimen of unknown origin, in no way violates the provisions of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature.

Externally, the gecko is yellowish-brown, and exhibits dark, reddish-brown longitudinal dorsal stripes, as found in other species of the same genus.

As to the origin of the reptile, Bauer and Russell pointed out that its acquisition must necessarily date from between 1819, when the Marseilles museum was founded, and 1902, after which full specimen

records are available. One possible site of origin is the French island of New Caledonia, located between New Zealand and the Solomon Islands, which would best explain its appearance in a French museum.

This hypothesis, however, would necessarily extend at least the recent range of the genus Hoplodactylus beyond New Zealand, and there is no other evidence to support this proposition.

Instead, Bauer and Russell prefer a North Island, New Zealand, origin, despite the fact that the Marseilles museum is not known to possess other New Zealand specimens. It is known, however, that French explorers and scientists were active during the early history of North Island, which may explain how the specimen reached France.

Furthermore, the reptile of Maori folklore seems to refer to the same animal, and this makes the case even more interesting for cryptozoology.

In 1873, writing in the Transactions of the New Zealand Institute, Major W.G. Mair discussed "the existence of a large forest lizard, called by the Maoris kaweau. In 1870 an Urewera chief killed one under the loose bark of a dead rata, in the Waimana Valley, he described it to me as being about 2 feet long and as thick as a man's wrist; colour brown, striped longitudinally with dull red."

Finally, Bauer and Russell admitted "the possibility that populations of this species still exist," and they proposed that North Island, New Zealand, would be the place to search for it. Pointing out that two species in the same genus were discovered only in recent years in remote parts of New Zealand, they stated: "It is possible that a 370 mm SVL gecko with

nocturnal habits, isolated and hidden retreats, and low population density, might still go unnoticed."

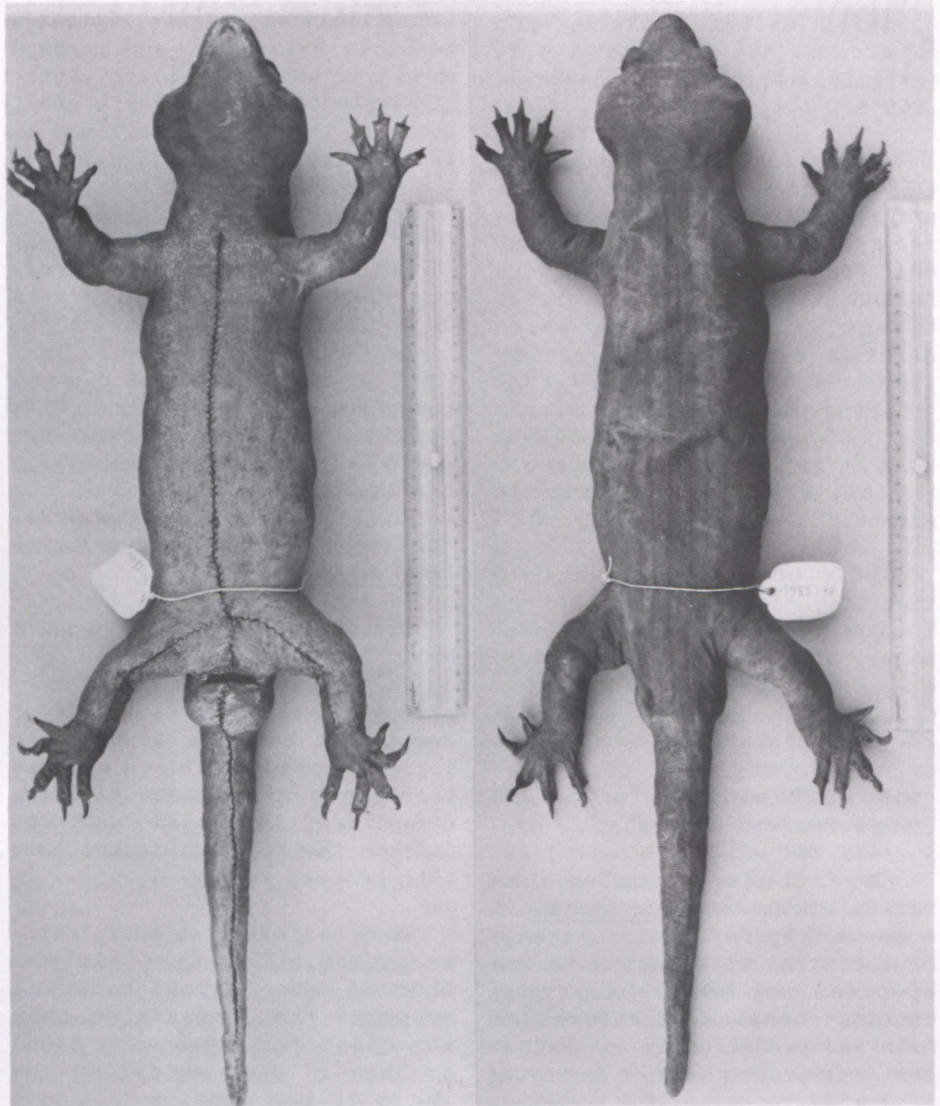
They also called for New Zealand herpetologists to try to locate additional material they may unknowingly have on the giant gecko, particularly bones which may be mixed in among subfossil tuatara bones. "Their similar size and [the] expectation that large reptile bones found in New Zealand are tuatara bones, may have confounded the matter," they stated.

Soon afterwards, Russell and Bauer published another paper in a French scientific journal ("The Giant Gecko *Hoplodactylus delcourti* and Its Relationship to Insular Gigantism and Endemism in the Gekkonidae," Mesogee, Vol. 46[1]:25-28, 1986). In this new article, they pointed out that, although the new species represents a SVL increase of 55 percent for the geckos, for the genus Haplodactylus itself it represents an increase of over 131 percent, the previous largest species in the genus being H. Duvauceli, with a maximum SVL of 160 mm.

They also proposed that the giant gecko was--or is--a climber with an omnivorous diet, one including fruits, large insects, and small vertebrates--including other reptiles.

More recently, Bauer and Russell have published a third paper, this time in the Journal of Ethnobiology (also edited in Tucson), and have addressed in more detail the giant gecko's possible link to a Maori heritage ("Hoplodactylus delcourti [Reptilia: Gekkonidae] and the Kawekawau of Maori Folklore," Vol 7[1]:83-91, 1987).

In reviewing the literature, they find that none other than Captain Cook was the first to mention the Maori reports. They note that "the folk taxonomy of



The total length of *Haplodactylus delcourti* is over 2 feet (622 mm). It is possible that the species still exists in remote parts of New Zealand. Attempts will be made to uncover any new information on its possible survival. (Aaron Bauer.)

the Maori, like that of many peoples, seems to be quite exact, with most of the currently recognized taxa being identified by unique Maori names." In all, four still unknown reptiles seem to have been known to the Maoris: the mokonui, the kumi, the ngarara, and the kawau or kawekawau, the latter probably being the newly discovered giant gecko.

ISC members may recall that John Becker, in his article "Towards an Etymology of Maori Waitoreke" in Vol. 4 (1985) of

Cryptozoology, mentioned the newly found giant gecko specimen, and he predicted that it would "turn out to be the ngarara." With the gecko's linkage to the kawekawau, however, this now appears not to be the case.

After quoting Major Mair (above) again, Bauer and Russell refer to other historical sources, particularly Sir Walter Buller, who wrote in the Transactions of the New Zealand Institute in 1895 that the kawekawau was semi-arboreal, had a

striking banded pattern, and existed in the deep forests of North Island until at least the 1860's.

Bauer and Russell then go on to state that the giant gecko's extinction "is by no means certain." They boldly point out that "there remain in the North Island extensive areas of relatively undisturbed land which might harbor remaining populations," and they suggest that "it is certainly no less likely that this animal still survives than it is that the much larger thylacine ... of Tasmania is extant."

Their Ethnobiology article then discusses--in good cryptozoological tradition--the discovery of other animals believed extinct, such as tagua (the Chacoan peccary), and New Zealand's own takahe bird, and goes on to propose that the giant gecko might survive "unnoticed in New Zealand today."

Nevertheless, using the native Maori name Kawekawau in a seemingly definitive linkage of the mythical animal with the specimen now available, they caution--because of deforestation and predation by rats--that the animal is clearly "at very high risk."

Towards the end of their article, Bauer and Russell discuss the potential usefulness of native or folk taxonomy in zoological systematics, and, referring to J. Richard Greenwell's classification article in Vol. 4 of Cryptozoology (1985), they conclude by stating that they have "a partial specimen ... 'known' only from anecdotal sources. It is precisely these sources that have aided in its identification."

Dr. Bauer, an ISC member who specializes in the herpetology of the Pacific basin, will be visiting New Zealand again soon, and he hopes to increase

local awareness of the reptile's possible existence, and perhaps even uncover contemporary sighting reports. His ultimate goal, assuming the animal survives, is to locate living specimens, which would represent a dramatic discovery.

Failing this, he hopes that osteological material will turn up in New Zealand museum collections. This would not only help fill in the scientific gaps on the giant gecko--the Marseilles specimen being incomplete--but would also definitely establish the New Zealand origin of the species, and, at the same time, confirm its link to the Maori kawekawau.

Meanwhile, Bauer and Russell have recently prepared a new scientific paper in which they present their reevaluation of two lizard bones, a lower ramus with attached teeth and what is probably a medial cloacal bone, discovered in a cave on South Island, New Zealand, in the late 19th century.

They believe that their reinterpretation of this old and obscure osteological material supports the proposition that the giant gecko was once found at Otago, thus extending the range of the species to South Island.

This new paper, which has been submitted to Cryptozoology and is currently being refereed, is likely to appear in Vol 7 (1988).

Recent giant gecko events do not end here, however. On the other side of the world, the discovery of yet another giant gecko occurred at about the same time, and a description of it was published in late 1986 by M. Baloutch, of the Faculty of Sciences of Tehran, and Michel Thireau, of the National Museum of Natural History, in Paris ("A New Species of Gecko, Euble-

pharis ensafi [Sauria, Gekkonidae, Eublepharinae], from Khouzistan [Southwestern Iran]," Monthly Bulletin of the Lyon Linnean Society, Tome 55, Fasc. 8, October, 1986).

With a total length of 295 mm (11.5 in), this Iranian gecko, although spectacular, is only half the size of the enormous Marseilles specimen described by Bauer and Russell.

However, it also has a colorful history, having come to light during the Iran-Iraq war. As the story goes, an exploding shell uncovered the large lizard during an intense battle at Fakke, Khouzistan. Al Reza Ensaf, an orderly/corporal, was able to catch the reptile, and the specimen eventually found its way to the Faculty of Sciences of Tehran.

At the time--this was prior to the Bauer and Russell description in 1986--it was rightly considered the world's largest gecko, and its discoverer, who has reportedly since been killed in the war, has been immortalized by having the species named after him.

Besides being outsized by the New Zealand specimen, however, there is some question as to the new species' status. Baloutch and Thireau were quite specific in their description that "in various morphological characteristics, E. ensafi clearly differs [from] the other species known in Iran: E. macularius and E. angramainyu."

Aaron Bauer, however, suspects that the gecko may actually be a large specimen of E. angramainyu, which is found in the same area of Iran. Future work will either confirm or deny the large Iranian gecko its status as a new species.

Geckos, meanwhile, have clearly and forcefully entered the annals of cryptozoology. □

NESSIE SURVIVES DEEPCAN SONAR PROBE

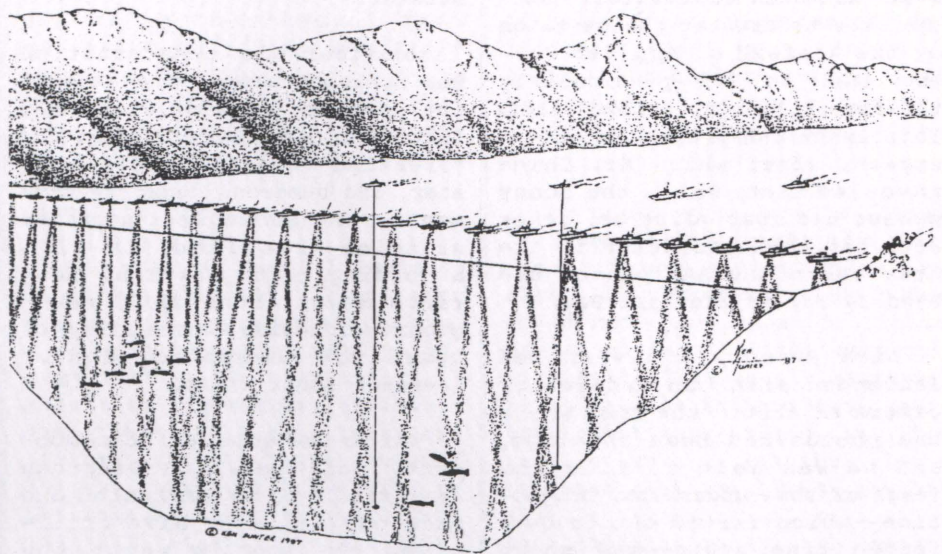
The venerable Loch Ness Monster--better known in the Scottish Highlands as "Nessie"--was the subject of another intensive search in October, 1987, when a fleet of boats conducted a sonar "sweep" down the length of Britain's largest body of water. Although some interesting sonar targets were detected, proof of the existence of the legendary beast seems as elusive as ever.

A preliminary trial of this kind of search procedure--lining up boats, each with its own downward-beaming sonar, to create a "moving curtain"--was conducted in 1986. However, bad weather resulted in the decision to postpone the project until the autumn of 1987.

The project was dubbed Operation Deepscan, and the principal planner behind it was Londoner Adrian Shine, leader of the Loch Ness and Morar Project, which has been conducting annual searches at the loch for 14 years.

Other participants and sponsors included the Official Loch Ness Monster Exhibition, boat-rental firm Caley Cruisers (which provided free use of the boats), and Lowrance Electronics, Inc. of Tulsa, Oklahoma, which provided the X-16 fish-finder sonar units and the technical expertise to go with them--including company president Darrell Lowrance. Thus, Operation Deepscan, like so many other previous efforts at Loch Ness, was an Anglo-American venture.

By August, 1987, the publicity generated by the upcoming event had mobilized the news media, and by early October many news organizations had their own reporters and camera crews on site. Over 300 newsmen descended on Loch Ness from 22 countries,



An idealized depiction of the "moving curtain" strategy of Operation Deepscan at Loch Ness, which consisted of deploying boats with downward-beaming Lowrance sonar units at 20-yard intervals. In reality, the boats did not cover the width of the loch, nor its length. Some interesting targets were tracked, but final conclusions have not been announced. (Lowrance Electronics, Inc./Ken Hunter.)

and 15 national television networks were represented. Expectations were high--much higher than the project could possibly deliver.

After a trial run on October 8, the first "sweep" was conducted on October 9, when 20 boats, mainly manned by volunteers, moved slowly down-loch from the Clansman Hotel marina, about 4 miles south of the northern end of the loch. The boats, each equipped with one of the downward-beaming Lowrance sonar units, spread across the loch at 20-yard intervals, and kept in line by the use of flags.

These 20 boats were followed by several support vessels, which could move to the area of any unidentifiable target (with more powerful sonar equipment) while the main flotilla kept moving.

This first 9-hour "sweep" ended at Fort Augustus, at the southernmost end of the loch. At an evening press briefing,

Mr. Shine revealed that some interesting mid-water targets had been detected. One target had been tracked off of Urquhart Castle at a depth of about 600 feet--near the loch's bottom--for about 2 minutes. Another target was tracked further south at a depth of 575 feet. Copies of the sonar charts were distributed to the press, and one Lowrance engineer volunteered that the target was about the size of a large shark.

The return "sweep" north from Fort Augustus was made the next day. The press briefing that evening, however, involved video cassette machines and television monitors, and the newsmen waited anxiously for what was rumored to be a spectacular revelation. After some delays and test runs, Mr. Shine announced that the press was going to be disappointed by the lack of what he called a "media monster," his own preferred hypothesis, if an unknown animal exists at all, being that it is a large fish.

He then went on to discuss how he thought the "media monster" had been cultivated: namely, the underwater photos taken by the Academy of Applied Science (AAS) in 1975--particularly the famous "gargoyle head" shot. This image was projected onto a screen, after which Mr. Shine revealed that, while the sonar sweeps had been going on, other work had been conducted in the area where the AAS photos had been taken, in Urquhart Bay.

Dick Raynor, a diver, had descended with an underwater camera at about the spot where the photos had been obtained, and he was able to film the image of some underwater projection--which turned out to be a rotted tree stump--and which supposedly explained the "gargoyle head" photo. When this image was projected next to the AAS "head" photo, the newsmen saw little resemblance. Mr. Shine explained that the lighting and contrast had to be just right for the similarities to be appreciated.

He also voiced skepticism over the 1972 AAS "flipper" photos, and their accompanying sonar data.

Mr. Shine expressed the hope that future efforts at the loch would now concentrate on real

scientific work, unsaddled by the expectation of a "media monster."

Considerable consternation was apparent among the attending newsmen, some of whom felt that they were being blamed for "creating" the Loch Ness Monster, and numerous negative comments--and subsequent negative articles--resulted. In all, according to an internal Lowrance memo, about 2,000 newspapers worldwide carried news of Operation Deepscan--and of Lowrance sonar units.

While the scientific components of Operation Deepscan have still to be evaluated and made public, many have criticized the way in which the operation was conducted from a public relations viewpoint.

One of the first to react was Robert Rines, President of AAS, who not only doubted the tree stump explanation for the "head" picture, but was critical of the way in which the information had been made public. He felt that such a determination should have been made through publication in a journal, which could then be evaluated and criticized by others.

"How can I respond if I have nothing to respond to, except

newspaper clippings?" he lamented to the Editor. Subsequent inquiries have revealed that Mr. Shine apparently does not plan to publish anything on the tree stump explanation.

Shine has been criticized in the past for not publishing the results of his Loch Ness work (he is a member of ISC, but has not submitted any Field Reports to Cryptozoology). His last presentation of data was in the British popular science magazine New Scientist in 1983.

A participant in Deepscan as an observer was Henry Bauer, a chemistry professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute who has studied the history of the Loch Ness controversy (see his book The Enigma of Loch Ness, University of Illinois Press, 1986). In a critique he circulated, Dr. Bauer complained that "the interpretation seemed unavoidable that, in the absence of anything noteworthy from the second day's sweep, we had been served up an exposé that had been kept ready for several days for such an eventuality. If so, it didn't work."

"Moreover," continued Dr. Bauer, "most of the press didn't know anything about the Academy or its results, and couldn't understand why reference was being made with such fanfare to something more than 10 years old...The press were not given any context into which they could put the events and statements of these few days."

In a broader context, Bauer is also troubled by Shine's stated approach to his work at the loch. Shine claims that, unlike previous groups, he is conducting "real" science--limnology and lake ecology--and that the search for unknown animals is more of a sideline--a statement others find hard to believe, as Shine has no particular scientific training in these other areas.



Adrian Shine, with Urquhart Castle ruin in background. (John Paul/The Mail on Sunday.)

If not monster hunting, Bauer wonders, "why, then, should he be exploring in Loch Ness? Why care what the bottom of the loch looks like, or what the biomass is, or the characteristics of the thermocline?"

Shine, who is now a permanent resident at the loch, seems to take these criticisms in stride, although he is vague on whether he plans to publish his findings from either Deepscan or his previous work.

As for the tree stump, a Lowrance spokesman, in a recent letter to the Editor, stated: "Our people scanned the same area with sonar, then sent down divers with a remote video camera to examine irregular bottom features. With one submerged stump, the camera produced a picture nearly identical to that of the famous 'Gargoyle Head' photo. The object has been raised and is now in the Exhibition...so the mystery was put to rest."

No photograph of the stump has been sent to Dr. Rines or to the Editor, so it is difficult to evaluate the claim. In a

letter to Dr. Bauer, however, Tony Harmsworth, director of the Exhibition, stated: "...the object is the head...I must emphasize that I do not think the object is the head -- it is the head, and stills show this clearly." The stump is reportedly about the size of a "large armchair," and it takes four people to carry it.

And what of Nessie? Lowrance is reportedly still analyzing its unexplained sonar tracks, and interesting results may eventually be announced. It should be remembered, however, that the project had technical limitations. The "sonar curtain" did not cover the full width of the lake as it moved down-loch, nor did it cover its full length.

Nessie proponents can thus point out that the animals--whatever they are--might be sensitive to the sonar beams' electromagnetic emissions, and could have avoided the curtain by moving to the sides of the lake, where there reportedly are many crevices. They can also point out that some identified targets were tracked.

Debunkers can likewise add Deepscan to their repertoire of negative evidence: that nothing of significance was tracked, and if there really were a breeding population of large animals in the loch, many more targets would have been detected.

To those who have followed Loch Ness events over the decades, it was obvious from the start that Deepscan would not--could not--provide a definitive answer to the question concerning the reality of the supposed large animals in Loch Ness, much less what they might be. The best it could possibly have produced was new data to evaluate in the context of data obtained previously. It was no fault of Shine's if the media expected more.

Regardless of what Shine thinks (or says), however, the "media monster" is not going to go away. The image of Nessie is now deeply imbedded in the public psyche worldwide, and that image, for better or for worse, is now an integral part of the cultural heritage of Scotland. □

PUBLICATIONS AIRMAILING

The Secretariat is pleased to announce that its journal, Cryptozoology, is now mailed to all members and subscribers outside of the U.S.A. by air mail. What this means is that non-U.S. members will receive the journal at about the same time--and often sooner--than U.S. members. In the past, non-U.S. members, particularly those in distant continents, had to wait up to 2 and sometimes 3 months for receipt of the journal. Now, delivery abroad should take no longer than 1-3 weeks, depending on the location of the recipient.

The new arrangement has been made possible by our publisher,

Allen Press, Inc., which has been experimenting with different air delivery methods for several years. After poor performance on the part of some private firms, Allen Press has entered into an agreement with the U.S. Postal Service for worldwide air shipment, at a special rate, of the journals it produces--provided the societies involved pay the extra cost.

This extra cost is not exorbitant, and our Society, like most others, has agreed to pay the added expense. The 1987 journal (Vol. 6) was thus the first one airshipped worldwide (except to Latin America) as part of this arrangement.

As ISC is an international organization, it was decided upon its founding that all members should pay the same dues, despite the fact that it costs more to ship the publications to certain members. This policy will continue, and membership and subscription rates for those outside of the U.S.A. will not be raised as a result.

The newsletter has been mailed by air-printed matter to non-U.S. members since the Society's founding, and with the added bonus of airmail delivery of the journal, members in other countries will now enjoy the same delivery benefits as U.S. members, thus improving communications throughout the Society.

TIM DINSDALE, 1924-1987

It is with great sadness that we must announce the death of our good friend Tim Dinsdale. As most readers will know, Dinsdale was the principal investigator of the Loch Ness Monster, having spent more time at the loch over the past 3 decades than any other Nessie researcher. His death was quite unexpected, and came just months after his election as an Honorary Member of the Society (see Newsletter, Winter, 1987). This obituary was written by Robert Rines, President of the Academy of Applied Science, and Ivor Newby. Both had known Dinsdale since the "old days" of the Loch Ness Investigation Bureau. Another obituary, in the form of a letter from Henry Bauer, also appears in this issue.

In writing about Tim Dinsdale from the perspective of our intimate personal and research associations, we are perhaps drawn as much to chronicle the exemplary human characteristics he lived by as the remarkable pioneering thrusts he championed in his cryptozoological pursuits at Loch Ness. These pursuits represent over 50 field expeditions over almost 3 decades in the quest for evidence of large animals in that Scottish lake.

It seems that he was groomed for a life of adventure, having spent his childhood in China, where his father was an agent for Butterworth & Squire, and where, together with his sister and several other children, he was kidnapped by river pirates while en route by boat to a new school. Fortunately, all were rescued by the Royal Navy.

Upon returning to England, he graduated from King's School in Worcester, and, during World War II, attended the RAF's pilot course in Rhodesia. Post-war, he qualified as an aeronautical engineer with de Havilland Aircraft, and then worked for Rolls

Royce and other firms, chiefly in the development and flight testing of the first generation of jet engines.

Finally, in the early 1960's, he became fascinated by the mystery of the so-called Loch Ness Monster. This mystery he probed as a lone researcher, as an associate and field director of the Loch Ness Investigation Bureau, and as a member of the Academy of Applied Science, providing continuity through the development of his own Loch Ness Association of Explorers. He lectured widely and internationally, and received numerous honors for his work, including fellowship in the Royal Geographical Society.

Last year, just a few months prior to succumbing to an untimely and unexpected massive heart attack on December 14, 1987--at age 63--he was elected an Honorary Member of the International Society of Cryptozoology, which was announced publicly at the Society's Edinburgh Membership Meeting in late July. This honor proved to be a most fitting farewell from the cryptozoological community in general, and the Loch Ness research community in particular. It was also an opportunity, while he still lived, for him to bask, if only momentarily, in the approbation of his peers. For that we are grateful.

As for the legacy that Tim Dinsdale has left us, it far transcends the sterling and objective reporting of his many publications and books, among them Loch Ness Monster (1961, 1972, 1976, 1982), The Leviathans (1966), Project Water Horse (1975), and The Story of the Loch Ness Monster (1973) -- the latter for children, his favorite audience. That legacy perhaps even more significantly resides in the demonstration of life's finest qualities blended

into a single living example: extreme integrity and objectivity; open-mindedness; receptiveness to the ideas of others and to fair comment on his own; overall friendliness to people; a cooperative attitude and a generosity with praise; and, above all, an abiding and relief-providing sense of humor and balance.

Tim, however, left sainthood to the patron of Loch Ness, St. Columba. He was very human. We cannot help but chuckle as we fondly remember his mechanical awkwardness aboard research vessels on the loch, ranging from walloping his head on bulkheads in his rush for a camera, to perpetually dropping critical objects overboard (including teeth and ignition keys). This only stimulated his inventive genius to devise numerous and mostly successful recovery mechanisms. We remember him proudly holding up the only large salmon he ever caught on the loch, only to see it jump from his arms back into the depths. We can still hear the echo of his universal expletive -- "Oh, damn!"

That voice is now silenced, and it will be sorely missed at the loch. Fortunately, however, there are some of us who will continue the search, and hopefully allay the only fear Tim ever expressed to us--that debunkers might recklessly try to rewrite history, and that newcomers, with perhaps less knowledge and competence, might merely retread old ground.

Whatever the future may hold, they will not erase the record of what Tim Dinsdale did, nor the highly credible evidence he developed at Loch Ness over many decades.

Robert H. Rines
Concord, New Hampshire, U.S.A.

Ivor Newby
Hanbury, Worcester
England, U.K.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Tim Dinsdale is gone. His death last December came as a real shock to many of us, and I, for one, have not yet fully recovered. This is not meant as an official obituary for Tim. We already include one in this issue by Bob Rines and Ivor Newby. Even so, I feel compelled to express my own thoughts on his passing.

If there is a single word with which I can describe Tim Dinsdale, it is that he was a gentleman--a word not often heard nowadays. Not in dress or manner, perhaps, but in an inner refinement. His honesty, his good nature, his humility, and his humor, were second to none. I never heard him--or heard others say they had heard him--utter a single bad word about any other individual, and we can be sure that, during his almost 30 years of fieldwork at Loch Ness, he must have had ample cause and opportunity to do so.

I had corresponded with Tim for only 10 years, and had met him only three times, once spending a day at his home. The

last time was in Edinburgh, at our Membership Meeting and Nessie symposium held in July, 1987, at the Royal Museum of Scotland. I remember the secret delight we enjoyed in keeping from him the fact that the Board of Directors had elected him as an Honorary Member--right up to the time he was to give his talk at the symposium. His old friend Roy Mackal, in introducing him, announced his election. The stunned but delighted look on Tim's face spoke a thousand words.

I had planned to do a newsletter interview with Tim immediately after the symposium, but we were both so exhausted and busy with other things that, during our goodbyes, we agreed an interview would go better in the calmer atmosphere of his home in southern England during one of my future trips to Britain.

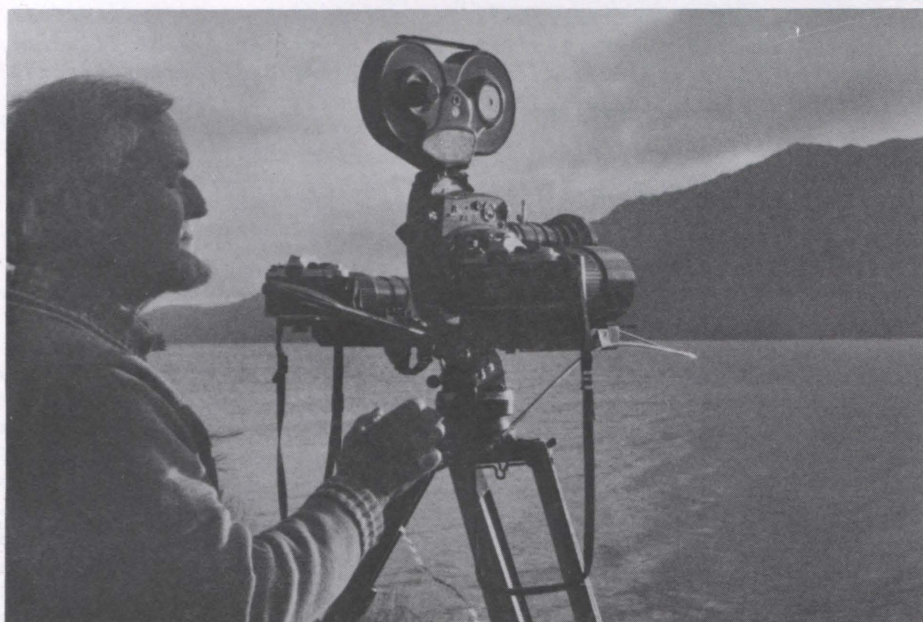
On September 14, 1987, I wrote to him, in my capacity as Secretary of the Society, officially informing him of his election. I stated: "Regardless of whether such an animal [Nes-

sie] exists or not, your dedication to the investigation, and the honesty and integrity with which you have proceeded, is unparalleled in this field. It is for this reason that the Board of Directors wishes to honor you." Tim wrote back with a brief note on October 9, stating how very much he appreciated his election and recognition by the Society. He added that he was sick with the flu, but that he would later write a formal letter of thanks.

It never came. A devastating phone call from Henry Bauer told me that it never would. Also, we will never have the benefit of his thoughts in a newsletter interview, and I wish now that I had insisted on it in Edinburgh. With his October note, Tim had sent me a photo of himself, gazing across his favorite waters. Without either of us realizing it at the time, it was a sort of farewell, so I include it here.

During my travels in Scotland that summer of 1987, I had also wanted to visit retired primatologist John Napier, one of our Honorary Members (and a leading authority on Sasquatch), but scheduling conflicts made me postpone that too. A few weeks after my return to Arizona, I received word of Napier's death. He had been living on the Isle of Mull, and I had always thought it curious that David James, another Honorary Member (a former Member of Parliament who had spearheaded the formation of the Loch Ness Investigation Bureau), also lived on the Isle of Mull--at his ancestral home, Torosay Castle.

With all the places there are in the world, what was the probability, I wondered, of two of the Society's eight Honorary Members both living on the Isle of Mull? I had written to both of them urging them to visit one another, and perhaps exchange views on Nessie and Sasquatch. James died in December of 1986



Tim Dinsdale, doing what he liked best.

(see his obituary in the Spring, 1987, Newsletter), and Napier in August, 1987 (see his obituary in the Winter, 1987, newsletter). As far as I know, they never did meet.

And now that they and Tim Dinsdale are gone, we are left to ponder their demise. In the end, all we are is history: our values, our assets and our faults, our accomplishments... all are reduced to the written word and to the memories of those who live on. We are all like small candles burning in a

dark, windy valley, each of us so individually vulnerable as we try to add our own little bit of light to the world. For Tim Dinsdale, the wind blew a little too hard one night.

And now, Loch Ness will somehow never be the same without Tim. Yet, in a strange way, it will never really be without him. Countless other humans from time immemorial have stood on its banks, sailed its waters, and been awed by its majesty. For a period, it was also the scene of much bloodshed between

Scotsmen and invading Englishmen. These previous dwellers and visitors are now part of a kind of psychic continuum, something like an historical equivalent of Jung's collective unconscious.

Like all those before him, Tim Dinsdale's essence has joined the rich if mainly unwritten historical continuum of Loch Ness.

J. Richard Greenwell
Editor

BRILL TO PUBLISH CRYPTOZOOLOGY BOOKS

E. J. Brill, the major Dutch scientific publisher, has become interested enough in cryptozoology to invest in the publishing of scholarly works in this area. British zoologist Peter Dance, formerly of the British Museum (Natural History) and recently appointed as Acquisitions Editor of Brill, has held discussions with Society Board members, who have agreed to refer promising manuscripts to the firm. Brill, it will be recalled, was the publisher of the original 1892 classic work The Great Sea-Serpent, by A. C. Oudemans.

In returning to the field of cryptozoology, Brill is interested only in well-researched, comprehensive works that have been thoroughly documented, but which will nevertheless have a public as well as a scientific appeal, and should consequently sell well. The first manuscripts to be accepted and published, in the autumn of 1987, were Roy Mackal's Living Dinosaur?: In Search of Mokele-Mbembe, and Lena Bottriell's King Cheetah: The Story of the Quest (see Cryptozoology Books 1980-1987, Newsletter, Autumn, 1987).

Meanwhile, Brill has held discussions with Society Presi-

dent Bernard Heuvelmans concerning the possibility of republishing his previous works, such as an updated edition of his classic On the Track of Unknown Animals, as well as In the Wake of the Sea Serpents and several others which have been published only in French.

"We fully support the concept of cryptozoology as a valid scientific endeavor," Mr. Dance recently stated in a communication to the Secretariat, "and we would like to gain the reputation of being the publisher of scholarly works in this area." The Society will keep its members informed of progress in Brill's cryptozoology publishing program, providing titles of books and ordering information.

EUROPEAN SECRETARIAT

Members in Europe are reminded of the existence of the Society's European Secretariat, located near Geneva, Switzerland. The European Secretariat responds to all inquiries received from Europe, as well as North Africa and the Middle East. Edward "Ned" Winn, Secretary for Europe, also responds to media inquiries concerning the Society.

Dr. Winn, an executive with SRI International, also provides a number of member services.

Individuals may join the Society or renew their memberships through the European Secretariat, and may also purchase all back issues of both the newsletter and journal. A complete stock is maintained in Switzerland, allowing for faster delivery than ordering through the Arizona Secretariat.

For those residing in Britain --or elsewhere--payments for new or renewing memberships, or for purchase of back issues, may be made in pounds sterling, saving the time and expense of converting to U.S. dollars for transmission to Arizona.

Due to the recent drop of the value of the dollar in relation to the pound, British members now need only pay £15.00 for membership (which now includes receipt of all publications by airmail) if they renew through the European Secretariat. Likewise, they need only pay £9 per back issue of the journal and £1.50 per back issue of the newsletter. (British members wishing to pay in U.S. dollars must continue to do so at the usual rate of \$25 for membership and \$15 and \$2.50 respectively for back issues of the journal and newsletter.)

All communications to the European Secretariat should be addressed to: Dr. Ned Winn, 25 chemin de Trembley, 1197 Prangins, Switzerland. □

CRYPTOLETTERS

To the Editor:

This refers to the article "Giant Fish Reported in China," published some time ago (see Newsletter, Autumn, 1986).

I am willing to accept Xiang's identification of the fish as Huchen, the largest salmon known. I have seen specimens 2 meters long in heavily fished areas of the Danube, and 4 meter-long individuals are possible in unexploited places. Human imagination easily adds the rest to 10 meters.

The species Hucho taimen is known from the region, and is considered presently conspecific with the European Hucho hucho, the largest known salmon. The color of the fish is reddish-rusty with fine place dots.

Eugene K. Balon
Department of Zoology
University of Guelph
Guelph, Ontario, Canada

Eugene Balon is the Editor in Chief of the journal Environmental Biology of Fishes.--Editor

To the Editor:

In reading through past newsletters, I recently became interested in a letter by Bruce Rivera (Newsletter, Autumn, 1985) and his suggestion of a cryptozoology "most wanted list." He gave the example of G.E. Taylor's 1938 film of an unknown object in Loch Ness, and its present unavailability.

Over the past several months, I myself have been attempting to locate the Malcolm Irvine film of Nessie, which was taken on December 12 (or 22), 1933, and shown on newsreels in the following year. The footage is regarded as positive evidence by Roy P. Mackal in his book The Monsters of Loch Ness (1976). The film has supposedly been lost for at least 25 years--see

Maurice Burton's book, The Elusive Monster (1961). But as Irvine's 1936 film turned up recently after being lost for over 40 years, I thought that perhaps the earlier film might also still exist.

I first wrote to the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television. Curator Michael Harvey wrote back informing me that five major British newsreels and a number of cine-magazines existed at the time. Three of them, Gaumont British News, Universal News, and British Paramount News are held by Visnews Film Library. Pathe newsreels are held by the Pathe Library, and British Movietone by their own library. I wrote to all of these places. Pam Turner, library manager at Visnews, wrote back stating that she was unable to trace the film. The same kind of response came from George Marshall, executive in charge of library services at Pathe. Both had searched their records and newsreel archives. No response was received from Movietone.

I then attempted to locate the movie The Secret of the Loch (1934), as some of the Irvine footage was used in that production--see Constance Whyte's More Than a Legend (1957), and Peter Costello's In Search of Lake Monsters (1973). I was able to determine that, unfortunately, the British Film Institute does not hold a copy, and was not even sure if it still existed. The Institute advised me to write to Weintraub Enterprises, the owner of the original distributor, but, alas, no reply has been received.

So, it seems that the trail has come to an end. A lot of time and effort put in for little reward. This is something that persons involved in cryptozoology encounter time and time again.

Michael Playfair
Loughborough, Leicestershire
England, U.K.

To the Editor:

I have bad news concerning the Coleman frog (Wood's Animal Facts, Newsletter, Spring, 1987). I heard about this frog from another source in 1984, and I wrote to the York-Sudbury Historical Museum, in Fredericton, New Brunswick, seeking confirmation or denial--and more details.

About a month later, Lori Pauli, the curator of the Museum, sent me a packet of photostats containing just about everything that has ever been published on "Froggie." Suffice is to say that "Froggie" never felt the warmth of the sun, nor the surge of blood through its limbs. My own disappointment was considerable at the time, and I regret to be the bearer of such unhappy tidings.

Michael J. Shields
Long Beach, California, U.S.A.

To the Editor:

Concerning the supposed record of 11lb 4oz for an American bullfrog (Wood's Animal Facts, Newsletter, Spring, 1987), I only went frog gigging once in my life, and that was at the Russian River, near Sebastopol, California. We gigged about 15 or 20 frogs, all of them weighing, I am sure, over 1 lb. I can't believe that 1 lb, 4 oz would be a record in anybody's frog book.

My wife is from Bolivia, and during Bolivia's war with Paraguay, around 1930, Bolivian soldiers returned from the Paraguayan Chaco with reports of giant frogs--or perhaps they were toads--which weighed 20 lb or more. Are there any other frog reports from that area? Incidentally, Bolivia lost the war.

Stanley Samuelson
Cordova, Alaska, U.S.A.

WOOD'S ANIMAL FACTS

"The largest member of the cat family (Felidae) is the now very rare Manchurian or Amur tiger Panthera tigris altaica. Adult males average 10 ft 2 in (3.10 m) in length (nose to tip of extended tail), stand 41-43 in (104-109 cm) at the shoulder, and weigh 551-573 lb (250-260 kg).

"...If we are to believe the claims of old Russian hunters, a number of tigers killed before the advent of 'over-shooting' were very much larger than those that exist today. Yankovsky, for instance, says he killed one with the aid of dogs in the T'umen-Tzu region between NE Korea and SE Manchuria which measured 13 ft (4 m) over the curves of the body when the carcass was frozen (Taylor 1956), and Barclay (1915) men-

tions another enormous tiger killed near Vladivostok which was adjudged to be 13 ft 5 in (4.09 m) long...

"Both these measurements, however, are impossibly long for an animal of very symmetrical build, and the fact that Yankovsky himself estimated the weight of his tiger at no more than 500 lb (227 kg) would seem to confirm that these figures were actually taken from dressed skins.

"Rowland Ward (1929) lists 5 Manchurian/Mongolian dressed skins ranging in size up to 13 ft 6 in (4.11 m), and Cavendish (1894) speaks of a 14 ft 6 in (4.42 m) skin from Korea. Burton (1928), too, says he saw skins of immense size in the Nijni Novgorod Fair in 1893. Such

measurements, however, are quite valueless, and bear no relationship to the true length of the tiger (the skin of a 10 ft [3 m] tiger can be stretched to 13-14 ft [4-4.3 m]).

"...Very little information has been published on the weights attained by large Manchurian tigers. Filipek (1934) quotes a weight of 350 kg (772 lb) for a huge individual killed near the Amur River, and Baikov shot a tiger in Manchuria which tipped the scales at 325 kg (717 lb).... These weights, however, were eclipsed by a gigantic male shot in the Sikhote Alin Mountains, Maritime Territory, in 1950, which scaled 384 kg (846 lb) (Sysoev 1960)."

Abstracted from:

The Guinness Book of Animal Facts and Feats, by Gerald L. Wood, Guinness Superlatives, Enfield, U.K. (3rd ed.), 1982.

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